

Message Text

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62

ACTION INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3657

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 3946

FOR BENJAMIN MARTIN, INR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, VE

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON LEADERSHIP OF VENEZUELAN METAL
WORKERS UNION (FETRAMETAL)

REF: MARTIN LETTER OF APRIL 22

1. BY SEPARATE MESSAGE EMBASSY HAS GIVEN CLEARANCE FOR
VISIT BY DAN SHARMAN OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS
WHO IS ARRIVING CARACAS MAY 5 TO MEET WITH THE FEDERACION DE
TRABAJADORES METALURGICOS, MINEROS, Y SUS SIMILARES DE VENE-
ZUELA (FETRAMETAL). LABATT IN CONTACT WITH AIFLD DIRECTOR
HAMMER WHO WILL BRIEF SHARMAN ON ARRIVAL.

2. FEBTRAMETAL CLAIMS 35,000 MEMBERS. AS IT GROUPS TECH,
NICALLY SKILLED WORKERS IN VARIETY OF MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES
AND IRON ORE MINING, IT IS ONE OF THE ECONOMICALLY MOST INFLU-
ENTIAL FEDERATIONS IN VENEZUELA.

3. PRESENT TOP LEADERSHIP OF FETRAMETAL IS POLITICALLY
DIVERSE. PRESIDENT JOSE MOLLEGAS IS OPPORTUNIST OF FIRST
WATER MOST RECENTLY IDENTIFIED WITH DEMOCRATIC LEFTIST URD PARTY.
DE FACTO SECOND RANKING OFFICIAL IS ANDRES MERCAU, AN ARGENTINE-
BORN CLAT-SUPPORTING COPEYANO. JESUS PEREZ IS ACCION DEMO-
CRATICA CONTENDER TO REPLACE MOLLEGAS. INTERNATIONAL POLICY
OF FETRAMETAL SHAPED MOSTLY BY ANDRES MERCAU, BUT HIS GENERAL
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POLITICAL ORIENTATION ALONG NON-ALIGNED THIRD WORLD LINES

IS SHARED WITH MOLLEGAS AND MANY OTHER FETRAMETAL OFFICIALS.
HOWEVER, WITH EXCEPTION OF MERCAU, THE POLITICAL VIEWS OF FETRA-
METAL OFFICIALS ARE BASED MORE ON PRAGMATISM THAN IDEALISM.
IF THEY CAN BE SHOWN THEY WILL BE ON WINNING SIDE THEY MAY WELL
SUPPORT THE UNITED AUTO WORKERS CANDIDATE FOR THE POST OF
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL METALWORKERS FEDERATION (IMF) IN SPITE OF
THEIR PAST FRIENDSHIP AND ASSOCIATION WITH IMV SECRETARY GENERAL
DAN BENEDICT.
MCCLINTOCK

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